

FWS Conservation Tip Sheet

Welcome to *the FWS Conservation Tip Sheet*, a compilation of feature story ideas about the people who's mission it is to conserve our most treasured natural resources and the places that inspire us.

The Conservation Tip Sheet story ideas will be updated four times a year and sent out on our news list server. If you are not a member of our list serve, sign up today: <http://news.fws.gov/listser.html>

These stories have been identified because of their great visuals and spokespeople.

Multiple Locations

1) Eco-tourism, Buyer Beware- Do Your Part for Wildlife, multiple locations

Timeframe: Ever-green but better around high travel seasons- summer, winter/spring breaks, cruise season

Location: Miami, New York, San Francisco, LA, San Diego

Contact: Patricia Fisher 202-208-1459

Description of Activity or Event: This is an important customer service and environmental story with the potential for terrific visuals and actualities. Reporters could expect to accompany Service wildlife inspectors on an actual, real-time inspection of incoming or outgoing wildlife shipments. Since the Service does not arrange for specific wildlife shipments to be inspected during a media tour, more often than not, the shipments will be both legal and mundane. However, what is compelling is the sheer volume of wildlife goods FWS inspectors must examine and the process they use. Also, as part of this story, a representative from the Service's Law Enforcement division could appear on television to be interviewed about "Buyer Beware" and what tourists can do to help ensure sustainable wildlife. Interviewee could bring a sampling of confiscated wildlife products. Finally, reporter could visit both the Service's Forensics Laboratory to learn how to distinguish between modern elephant ivory, ancient mastodon ivory and walrus ivory as well as other products made of endangered wildlife and the Wildlife Repository where reporter could see first hand the sheer volume of wildlife products judged to have been illegal for some reason.

On-Camera Presence: Various Service law enforcement personnel.

Airport: Segment would take place at airport or where cruise ships embark in one of the aforementioned cities

2) Fish Passage: Back to the Future, multiple locations

Timeframe: Open; limited in some states by seasons

Location: Alaska, Arizona, California, Florida, Iowa, Idaho, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

Contact: Ken Burton, 202-208-5657

Activity/Event: When the United States was a young country, dam-building was essential to the economy. Relatively small dams created new routes for barge traffic, provided irrigation for crops, and as the Industrial Revolution took hold, power for factories and communities. Over time, many of these dams were abandoned as the economy changed or other power sources fell into favor. Forgotten for decades, these barriers in many of America's waterways continued to fragment habitat and impede fish trying to reach historic habitat or spawning grounds. Many fish populations suffered. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fish Passage Program is making a difference. Completely voluntary, the Fish Passage Program works with civic and conservation organizations, as well as state and other Federal agencies to create partnerships that vastly stretch taxpayer dollars while they remove old, abandoned dams and other barriers. The program has been a huge success and is having a positive impact on fisheries. Great shots are available in 24 states of dams and barriers. Many biologists are available to talk about what these barriers did, and what their absence means. Possible shots of some dams being removed. Great scenic opportunities.

On-Camera Presence: Depends on the state selected for story; availability of biologists can be tailored to location.

Airport: Depends on which state is selected for story.

3) North American Waterfowl Survey, multiple locations

Timeframe: May of 2005

Location: Various locations available

Contact:

Cindy Hoffman 202/208-3008

Description of Activity or Event: 2005 marks the 50th Anniversary of the Annual Waterfowl Survey. This survey, conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Canadian Wildlife Service is the largest and most reliable wildlife surveys in the world. Pilot-biologists fly more than 80,000 miles at treetop level to track the population levels of waterfowl and other bird species. Ground crews made up of observers and others from federal and state wildlife agencies add to the data collection efforts. These surveys determine the status of North American waterfowl populations and are a major factor in setting annual waterfowl hunting regulations.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service will be coordinating opportunities for reporters to interview the pilot-biologists. Some unique opportunities for a select number of journalists to join the pilot-biologists in a plane to see how they perform their survey work will be made available; and in August, there is an opportunity to incorporate a visit to a banding camp in Saskatchewan. Contact Cindy Hoffman at 202-208-3008 for more information.

Locations and Opportunities to meet with Pilot biologists:

1. Saskatchewan between Aug 2 - 12
2. Louisiana: June through July 23
3. Colorado: July 27-28
4. Maryland/Delaware region: June through July 6, July 15-23.
5. North Dakota: July 8-15

On-Camera Presence: Pilot biologists that actually conduct the surveys

Airport: Depends on location of choice to cover event.

Southeast

1) Osprey and Fishing Lines, Maryland

Timeframe: Anytime during the summer months

Location: Cheasapeake Bay (177 Admiral Cochrane Drive, Annapolis, MD: Field Office of US Fish and Wildlife Service)

Contact: Valerie Fellows: 410/573-4556 or Pete McGowan: 410/573-4523

Description of Activity or Event: One doesn't have to spend a lot of time on the water to see the Chesapeake's ospreys. Boaters, watermen, and even people on land can hear the high-pitched whistle of an osprey surveying the scene from above. Ospreys thrive around the Bay and are common sights on navigational buoys and markers. However, a new threat has come to light.

Ospreys are very tolerant of humans and will often line their nests with a variety of manmade materials, including paper, plastic rope and fishing line. Some of these prove to be deadly. Ospreys with legs, wings and beaks entangled in fishing line can become immobilized and can die of starvation. In addition, constricted limbs can result in amputation, resulting in a slow death. Anglers can reduce the injuries or deaths to ospreys and other wildlife simply by properly discarding fishing lines and hooks. Biologists from the Annapolis field office can take camera crews out to see osprey nests, fishermen and interview osprey experts.

On-Camera Presence: Valerie Fellows and Pete McGowan. Other experts can be identified for interviews.

Airport: *Baltimore Washington International Airport*

Mid-west

1) Trout Angling on Coles Creek, Wisconsin

Timeframe: April-September. September is best.

Location: W7996 20th St. W
Necedah, Wisconsin 54646 - 7531

Contact: Bill Peterson, Necedah NWR, (608) 565-4415

Description of Activity or Event: For the first time in decades, trout anglers will be throwing their lines into Coles Creek this spring, thanks to the Coles Creek Partnership, which included Necedah NWR, WI. The USFWS' Partners for Fish and Wildlife provides habitat restoration assistance to private landowners.

The refuge, a nearby neighbor, provided nearly \$71,000 in Challenge Cost Share grants and other funding – about a quarter of the project's cost – and technical expertise to restore 5.6 miles of native brook trout stream on private land. The restoration raised the waterway's classification to Class 1 Trout Stream.

FWS personnel could bring camera crew out to interview partners; fish for trout; assist with electro-fishing surveys; view ongoing stream restoration projects and degraded, unrestored streams; etc.

On-Camera Presence:

Dave Vetrano, Wisconsin DNR, Trout Ecology in Southwest Wisconsin

Bob Micheel, Monroe County Land Conservation Department, Stream Restoration

Coles Creek Private Landowners, Landowner Perspective

Airport: LaCrosse Airport, 40 miles to stream site

Southwest

1) Wild Turkey and the Pueblo Indians, New Mexico

Timeframe: Anytime

Location: Albuquerque, New Mexico

Contact: Elizabeth Slown, 505-248-6909

Description of Activity or Event: It has been more than four decades since any member of Santa Ana Pueblo has heard the soft sounds of turkey wings beating the air as the birds settle into the bosque (riverine forest) for the night. The first ever tribal wildlife grant was awarded to Santa Ana Pueblo in New Mexico to establish a self-sustaining population of wild turkey within the Pueblo's restored bosque along the Rio Grande just north of Albuquerque. A grant of \$210,301. was awarded on March 11. Less than a week later six turkeys were released on Pueblo lands with the promise of several more to come. The Pueblo is just purchasing telemetry equipment to be put on new and existing birds. Interview Pueblo wildlife managers and see how the turkey is important to the Pueblo both culturally and spiritually.

Airport: Albuquerque International Sunport

2) Banding Mottled Ducks, Texas

Timeframe: Summer

Location: Gulf Coast, Texas

Contact: Elizabeth Slown, 505-248-6909

Description of Activity or Event: Using airboats and spotlights, biologists spend their summer nights and early mornings capturing and banding mottled ducks on the Gulf Coast of Texas. These secretive waterfowl do not migrate preferring to spend their entire lives in the coastal marsh. Recent population declines in this indicator species have prompted extensive investigation into factors possibly causing the loss of these birds. Investigations into the reproduction and survival of mottled ducks should provide guidance for future management of the birds. Come along with biologists and help round up and band adults and young and gather information on survival, movements, and habitat use in an attempt to piece together an understanding of this unique bird.

Airport: Houston, TX

3) Merging Oil and Wildlife, Texas

Timeframe: Late spring and during winter migrations

Location: Liberty, Texas

Contact: Stuart Marcus, Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge Manager (936) 336-9786

Description of Activity or Event: A family owned oil company that found gas under the refuge but readily agreed to drill from a pad off of refuge property. Not only that, but they donated some \$30,000 to the refuge Friends group to help build the pier at Champion Lake. They have tried to do a good job in balancing energy with nature. Thousands of people use this pier and the lake also supports heron and egret rookeries (right now) of some 20,000 birds.

Airport: Houston Hobby

4) Oryx Hunt, New Mexico

Timeframe: Fall (September through January)

Location: Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, Socorro, New Mexico and surrounding White Sands Missile Range

Contact: Elizabeth Slown, 505-248-6909

Description of Activity or Event: Each year the San Andres National Wildlife Refuge holds an oryx depredation hunt in New Mexico. Oryx (*Oryx gazella*) (pronounced or-icks) are an African antelope introduced into the Tularosa Basin of New Mexico in the late 1960's by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. They are very beautiful animals but they have become a large problem on the Refuge as they are impacting refuge habitats and native species. Organized hunts help keep the population under control.

Airport: Albuquerque, NM.

ALASKA

1) Subsistence Hunting in Alaska

Timeframe: Mid April through May.

Location: Bethel, Alaska

Contact: William Ostrand and Fred Armstrong, US Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 E Tudor Rd. Anchorage, AK 99503 (phone 877 229 2344)

Description of Activity or Event: The Migratory Bird Treaty of 1916 between the United States and Great Britain (for Canada) was our first international agreement for the much needed protection of migratory birds. It inadvertently prohibited peoples of northern Canada and Alaska from taking birds during their primary subsistence harvest period. After many years of discussion and negotiations, the first legal spring harvest since the 1916 treaty was enacted, took place in 2003. Reporters can interview Native leaders, as well as state and federal wildlife managers, as well as show Alaska Natives participating in their traditional spring hunt, and demonstrate their traditional dependency on the harvest.

On-Camera Presence:

Myron Naneng, Yupik leader, member of the negotiating team that developed the treaty amendments, President of the Association of Village Council Presidents and member of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management Council.

Matt Robus, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, member of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management Council.

Rowan Gould, Director of the Alaska Region, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Fred Armstrong, Executive Director of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management Council.

Mike Rearden, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

Airport: This event takes place throughout rural Alaska. We suggest filming near Bethel or a more remote village.